

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 14213 140312Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----141233Z 121827 /40
R 131830Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2803

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 14213

EXDIS

FOR STATE NSC AND CIA ONLY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: FR, PFOR, OVIP (PONTILLON, ROBERT)
SUBJECT: PONTILLON VISIT TO US

SUMMARY: DURING LUNCH WITH CHARGE MAY 13, SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL SECRETARY FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS ROBERT PONTILLON SAID THAT HIS MAY 23-27 VISIT TO THE US WOULD SERVE TWO MAIN PURPOSES: TO LAY GROUNDWORK FOR A POTENTIAL MITTERRAND VISIT IN SEPTEMBER OR OCTOBER AND TO STRENGTHEN CONTACTS WITH US OFFICIALS. CONCERNING MITTERRAND VISIT, PONTILLON REITERATED THAT POSSIBILITY OF MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER WILL BE DECISIVE FACTOR IN SOCIALISTS' PLANNING. END SUMMARY.

1. PONTILLON VISIT: PONTILLON WILL DEPART PARIS SUNDAY MAY 22 FOR FIVE DAYS IN WASHINGTON FOLLOWED BY BRIEF STOPOVERS IN NEW YORK AND MONTREAL (HE PLANS TO MEET QUEBEC LEADER LEVESQUE DURING LATTER STOP). HE CHARACTERIZED US VISIT AS ONE OF PREPARATION AND INFORMATION AND AS ONE WHICH SHOULD AVOID GREAT PUBLICITY, AS OPPOSED TO THE COT ROCARD TRIP IN JANUARY. CHARGE INFORMED PONTILLON OF TENTATIVE SCHEDULE, INCLUDING PROPOSED TALKS WITH DEPSEC CHRISTOPHER OR UNDERSEC HABIB, HARTMAN, CONFIDENTIAL

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LAKE, BARTHOLOMEW, NSC OFFICIALS AND OTHERS. PONTILLON VIEWS SCHEDULE AS OPPORTUNITY FOR CONSTRUCTIVE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON WIDE RANGE OF SUBJECTS INCLUDING CSCE, NATO, MEDITERRANEAN ISSUES, EUROCOMMUNISM, ETC.

2. MITTERRAND AND THE PRESIDENT: FOREMOST SUBJECT ON PONTILLON'S MIND WAS CERTAINLY PROPOSED MITTERRAND VISIT.

CORE PS POSITION IS THAT MITTERRAND MUST HAVE SOME ASSURANCE OF MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT BEFORE LAUNCHING VISIT. AS SOCIALIST DEPUTY JEAN-PIERRE COT TOLD EMBOFFS MAY 12, "MITTERRAND CAN'T GO TO THE US AND JUST WALK AROUND". PONTILLON HIMSELF APPROACHES SUBJECT BY AGREEING THAT PRESIDENT CARTER COULDN'T MEET MITTERRAND IN FRANCE SHOULD THE PRESIDENT PAY A VISIT HERE, ALTHOUGH IT WAS RELATIVELY EASY FOR CARTER TO MEET WITH OPOSITION LEADERS IN GREAT BRITAIN WHERE ALTERNANCE IN POWER IS MORE READILY ACCEPTED. PONTILLON ALSO EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDING OF US AWARENESS OF ELYSEE SENSITIVITIES AND NOTED THAT THERE WAS NO VALUE TO ANYONE IN SIMPLY ANTAGONIZING THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT. BUT ON THE SUBJECT OF MITTERRAND VISIT TO THE US, PONTILON STATED FLATLY THAT HE HAD BEEN ASKED TO SAY THAT SUCH A VISIT COULDN'T BE MADE UNLESS THE SOCIALIST FIRST SECRETARY COULD BE RECEIVED BY THE PRESIDENT. CHARGE SAID THAT REQUEST FOR MEETING WOULD BE GIVEN NECESSARY CONSIDERATION AT WASHINGTON LEVEL, BUT THAT NOTHING COULDBE GUARANTEED AT THIS TIME.

3. COMMENT: SOCIALISTS OBVIOUSLY SEE GREAT VALUE IN WASHINGTON VISIT BY MITTERRAND AND PARTICULARLY IN MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT. THEY VIEW THEMSELVES AS A MAJOR OPPOSITION PARTY, IN THE SAME SENSE AS MARGARET THATCHER'S CONSERVATIVES, WARRANTING THE ATTENTION OF THE US GOVERNMENT'S HIGHEST OFFICIAL. OTHER DISCUSSIONS ASIDE, THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT PONTILLON WILL BE SEEKING AS FIRM A COMMITMENT AS POSSIBLE ON QUESTION OF MITTERRAND/

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CARTER ENCOUNTER. GAMMON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
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Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
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Sent Date: 13-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977PARIS14213
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770171-0035
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Litigation History:
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Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2535791
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PONTILLON VISIT TO US SUMMARY: DURING LUNCH WITH CHARGE MAY 13, SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL SECRETARY FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, FR, US, (MITTERRAND, FRANCOIS), (PONTILLON, ROBERT)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d4683895-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009